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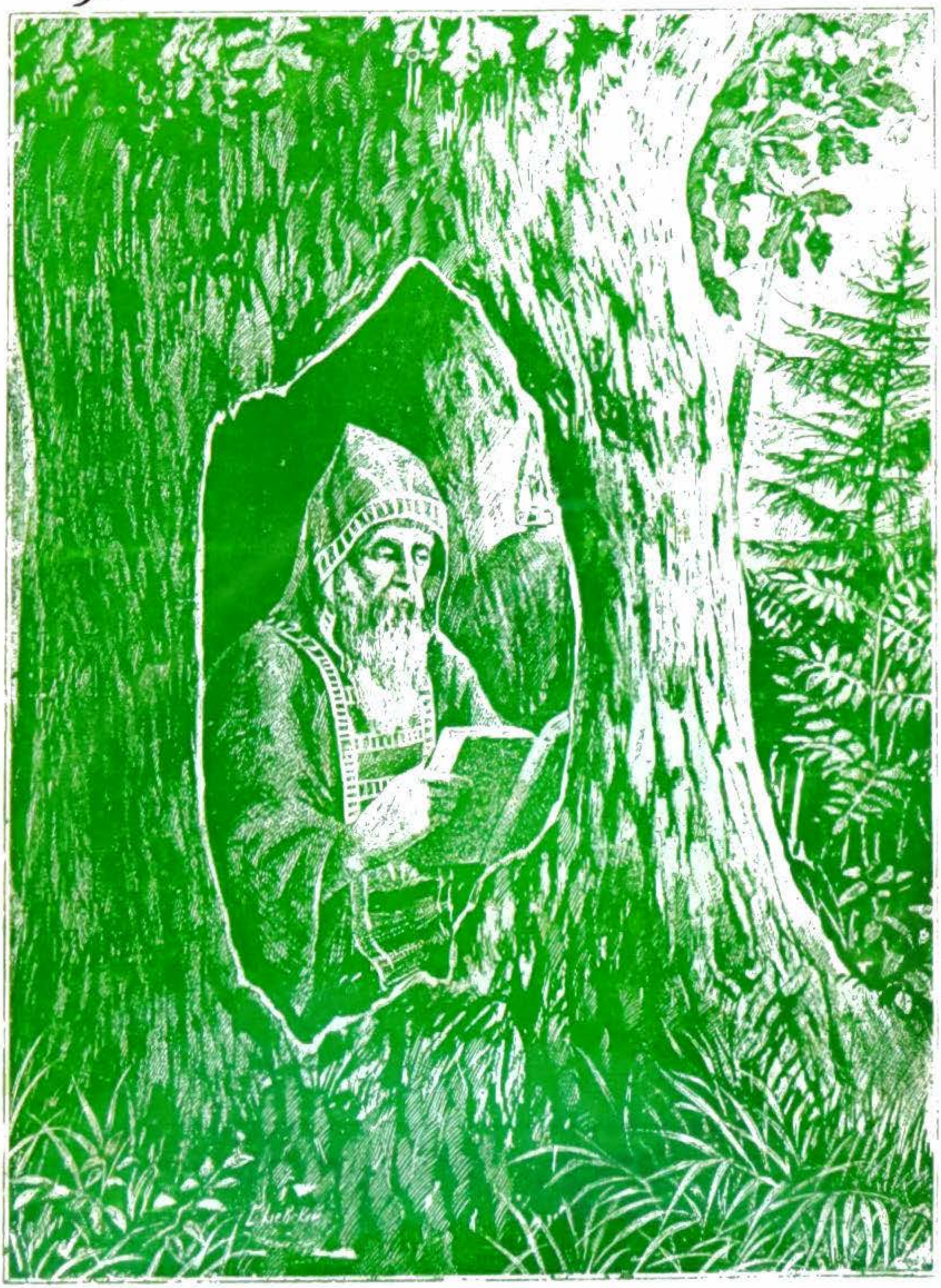

ST. TIKHON OF KALUGA

Father Gerasim, summer, 1960
This issue is dedicated to the blessed memory of one
of the founders of the St. Herman of Alaska Monastery,
Archimandrite Gerasim, who reposed ten years ago (Sept. 30, 1969).

From this day, from this hour,
from this minute, let us strive
to love God above all,
and fulfill His holy will.

THE ORTHODOX WORD

For the Mission of True Orthodox Christianity

A Bimonthly Illustrated Periodical
of the St. Herman of Alaska Brotherhood
Established with the blessing of His Eminence
the late *John (Maximovitch)*, Archbishop of
Western America and San Francisco, Russian
Orthodox Church Outside of Russia

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COVER: ST. TIKHON OF KALUGA

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Saint Herman Summer Pilgrimage, 1979

ST. INNOCENT OF ALASKA
1879-1979

THE YEAR 1979 marked the hundreth anniversary of the death of one of the greatest missionaries the Orthodox Church has produced. The holy hierarch Innocent of Alaska was a true apostle in the full meaning of this word, and what a shame it is to today's Christians that such a man of genuine Christian zeal and greatness is almost unnoticed. Thus, the spiritual atmosphere in which Christians live today, being already heavily charged with the spirit of militant lawlessness and rising paganism, is deprived of a beam of Christ's light which can warm the living hearts of the remnant of faithful Christians—hearts that are too often growing cold in these cruel days.

This same year also marked a decade since the passing away of one of St. Herman Monastery's inspirers and founders, the humble desert-dweller of modern America, Archimandrite Gerasim of Spruce Island, Alaska (1888-1969).

With God's help the St. Herman Pilgrimage this year was quite concentrated and fruit-bearing. The first weekend was followed by a week-long course in basic Orthodox theology, culminating in the baptisms of two new converts on the "graduation day," which was the eve of our Lord's Transfiguration.

Preceding the feast day of St. Herman's canonization (July 27/August 9) there were celebrated the customary services: Ninth Hour, Small Vespers and Compline, followed by supper in the monastery trapeza, and then the All-night Vigil service, according to Russian usage but served and sung entirely in English. In the morning, to the ringing of the church bells,

During the 1979 Pilgrimage—the choir singing

Fr. Alexey Young giving his talk on St. Innocent

Fr. Gerasim in front of his Spruce Island cell, Pascha, 1936

St. Innocent

Fr. Nikon of Optina

His Grace Bishop Nektary of Seattle arrived, and the pontifical Liturgy proceeded with the usual inspiring solemnity. Besides the monastery clergy, the newly-ordained priest, Father Alexey Young, concelebrated; he had been ordained in this very church earlier this year and had served his first Liturgy here the following day, on the Sunday of the Myrrh-bearing Women and Sts. Joseph of Arimathea and Nikodemos—very appropriately for Father Alexey, who publishes the well-known Orthodox periodical *Nikodemos*. The service ended with a procession of banners, icons, and the large coffin-like reliquary of St. Herman, which contains also the holy relics of many other great saints, including St. Panteleimon, whose feast is also celebrated on this day.

During the meal after the Liturgy, the Life of St. Herman was read by a Jordanville seminarian, Br. Thomas Anderson, after which Bishop Nektary recounted a brief and touching incident in the life of a new martyr, Father Nikon of Optina, whom he knew well from his childhood days in Optina Monastery.

NEW MARTYR NIKON OF OPTINA

By Bishop Nektary of Seattle

Today was read the Gospel which is appointed to be read on the feasts of monastic saints: this is the Gospel of the Beatitudes. The last Beatitude is: "Blessed are ye, when men shall hate you, and when they shall separate you from their company, and shall reproach you, and cast out your name as evil, for the Son of Man's sake. Rejoice ye in that day, and leap for joy; for behold, your reward is great in heaven" (Luke 6:22-23).

As I read this Gospel, I remembered an incident in Optina Monastery. This is the great monastery which was renowned in recent times for its clairvoyant elders.

When the Revolution of evil memory broke out in Russia, and when the God-fighting regime began its fight against religion, a so-called "liquidation commission" was sent to this monastery.

There was a Hieromonk Nikon in the monastery. He had tuberculosis. He read and sang on the cliros. And when this "liquidation commission" began its work, when they began to arrest monks, this Hieromonk Nikon was also arrested. He was the kindest of men. He was condemned, shaved of all the hair on his body, mocked, spat upon, slandered, and in the end he was sent, already a sick man, to a concentration camp. There he died of tuberculosis. He was already in his last days when he wrote a letter

to a nun of his acquaintance. (This nun was my mother, and when she read us this letter we children sat and wept as we listened.)

I would like to share this letter with you. He wrote: "There is no limit to my happiness." Why? Because he came to the monastery for the sake of Christ. And the sorrows which he endures, he endures for the sake of Christ. And therefore we have the words of the Saviour that if men will hate and separate you and reproach you for the sake of Christ, He gives a promise: "Rejoice ye and leap for joy, for your reward is infinitely great in heaven." "And so I believe my Lord" (the letter continues), "that these words apply to me also, and therefore I await with impatience that happy moment when I will be dissolved from this corruptible body and will be united with my Lord."

This came to my memory as telling us how to look upon sorrows. If a man endures for the sake of Christ, he will receive a reward. And this is a great source of instruction for our earthly life. It is by many sorrows that we enter into the Kingdom of Heaven. And therefore, if someone has any sorrow and bears it for the sake of the Lord with joy, this will be a step into the Kingdom of Heaven.

This is what I wanted to tell you today.

There has been preserved the text of another letter which New-Martyr Nikon sent from Optina Monastery at the time (in the mid-1920's) when the approaching end of its existence was felt by all the brethren there. This deeply-felt, poetic letter, addressed to his sorrowing mother, is all that is left from this marytr.*

After the meal and a brief rest, all the pilgrims gathered in an open area surrounded by the beautiful monastery woods of pine and oak that gradually roll up-hill to Mt. St. Herman. The site of the future monastery library, now covered with a primitive tent-like roof of logs and canvas as protection against the summer sun, was where the talks and lectures took place. These talks began after the prayer, "O Heavenly King," and a brief opening word by Bishop Nektary:

Dear Father Herman, Father Seraphim, and Father Alexey, and all here present in this holy monastery listening to the talks of your spiritual fathers: May the Lord bless you in this work of Christ. Pay attention to all that your spiritual fathers teach you here. Find the ways to acquire in your life those thoughts which they will present to you. Remember that human

* See the text of this letter later in this issue.

life is short, and the sooner you start on the path of salvation, the path that makes your life more in accordance with the Church, the easier it will be to save yourself and be with the Lord.

I am sorry that I cannot, owing to circumstances, stay longer with you now. I call God's blessing upon you and this good work. May God help you to listen attentively to the lectures and receive spiritual profit, applying this in your life and your relations with other people. Vladika Anthony has asked me to give his blessing to your good undertaking. I call God's blessing upon you all.

To commemorate the holy hierarch Innocent, and to show that we are one with him in spirit, the first lecture was by Father Alexey Young, who is serving mission parishes in Etna, California (Sts. Adrian and Natalie) and Medford, Oregon (St. Innocent of Irkutsk). With deeply-felt love for the saint, Fr. Alexey spoke on:

ST. INNOCENT OF ALASKA AND HIS MESSAGE FOR US

Father Alexey addressed his talk to the young people present and began with a recent news item about a twelve-year-old boy who had shot his mother and two sisters because he felt "deprived of material things." Then he cited several examples of "successful" worldly people who were deeply unhappy. Such examples lead us to ask the questions: What is happiness? What is the meaning of life? There is a superficial "happiness" that comes from obtaining outward things; but this does not bring inward peace. Orthodox teachers like St. Innocent instruct us in the path to *true* happiness.

His little book, "Indication of the Way into the Kingdom of Heaven," was first written in the Aleutian language and appeared in 46 editions in the 19th century. It was written not for theologians or philosophers, but for humble native Americans. It teaches that we men are lost and lonely wanderers on the earth as long as we do not have God. Only in God's revelation do we find the truth of things—the truth about the world and about myself, the meaning and purpose of life; and only with this truth can we have peace in our lives.

The Beatitudes that were read in today's Gospel show us where true blessedness or happiness is to be found—what Christ tells us here is absolutely revolutionary, something that shakes men and has turned the world

upside down. St. Innocent's little booklet, just fifty pages long, tells us of this teaching, about the finding of true happiness. This is a teaching that is very simple but at the same time very profound. It was written for people who do not know very much about God, and that is why it is so valuable for us—because we too don't know very much about God.

St. Innocent teaches us that we must be aware of our spiritual poverty. Often we are rich in the things that satisfy our bodies, but poor in spiritual things. Our soul has its appetites too, its needs and desires; we hardly give these things a thought and that is why we are all so one-sided and why our souls are so undernourished. We cannot be real persons until our soul knows God. We must confess our spiritual poverty and cry out from the depths of our soul: O God, be merciful to me a sinner.

Not only are we poor spiritually, but our souls have a disease—its name is sin, and it is fatal unless we go to the Physician of souls and receive a cure for it. We have sinned against God, and to confess our sins, St. Innocent says, is the first step on the road to true happiness.

Secondly, St. Innocent teaches, we must be willing to receive the treasures that Christ has provided us instead of trying to find the false, hollow treasures of this world. God sent His Son to show us how to save our souls; He died on the Cross for us and rose from the dead, conquering death for us so that we might live in heaven with Him forever.

But God asks something of us in return: we must confess our spiritual poverty and renounce our sins, promise to struggle against them and then turn to His Church for help, strength, and guidance, receiving the Holy Mysteries (the "treasures" the Church offers us) and live a conscious Orthodox Christian life. Then Christ puts a little bit of heaven into our souls, and our life begins to change and we begin to taste a little of Christ's peace and happiness.

St. Innocent teaches that we must follow this path of our own free will; neither Christ nor His Church will force us to do this against our will.

We must realize that we depend on God completely—we must be like little children totally dependent on our parents.

Again, St. Innocent teaches, we must be willing to deny ourselves. This applies very much to us today, when hardly anyone wants to do this. We do this for the sake of the Kingdom of Heaven; to obtain it we must hunger and thirst, not after worldly things, but after righteousness. This hunger is a sign of life, and if we don't have it we are spiritually asleep or dead—for such a person, hell has already begun. Especially when we are

young, the distractions of this world can take such a hold on us that we forget about our souls or give them a starvation diet. But if we have any hunger or thirst for righteousness, we will reach out to our Redeemer and Saviour, Who is waiting for our response in order to fill us spiritually.

St. Innocent acknowledges that this path is difficult. But if we labor greatly to obtain earthly treasures, how much more should we labor for heavenly treasure, the eternal Kingdom of Heaven? Jesus Christ has given us the example of His life of sufferings, which we must follow in order to obtain an unending reward in heaven.

Everyone in the world—not just Christians—has to bear some kind of suffering. For Christians, however, the Cross serves as a cure and a means of inheriting the Kingdom of Heaven, while for non-Christians suffering is just seen as a punishment which becomes more and more heavy and difficult, until in the end it becomes one great, hellish burden, under which those poor people will suffer eternally. But for Christians, our cross can actually become lighter and sweeter, until finally it is turned into a crown of eternal glory.

Therefore, St. Innocent says, our real problem is not that the way into the Kingdom of Heaven is difficult, but that we have no real desire to go there—we can't be bothered to make the effort. This is the state of spiritual sleep or death.

What can be done about this situation? St. Innocent gives some very practical answers to this question: Sinful pleasures ruin the health of our soul, can make us literally stuffed and sick and with no room for God in our souls; therefore we have to start cleaning up our heart and soul. Second, being satisfied with oneself can ruin our hunger for God and prevent us from changing ourselves. We must stop making idols of ourselves and look at ourselves realistically, as others see us, and even more as God sees us. And third, we must recognize and confess our secret sins, which push God away from us. Finally, we must stop neglecting our spiritual life and begin *now* to make an effort. If we truly hunger and thirst for righteousness, we will always want to take some time for prayer and Divine services and spiritual reading; if we don't do these things, our souls will begin to die from lack of nourishment.

But don't worry about how other people are living; the fact that others are sinning isn't going to save you. Attend to yourself, and if you are a parent or a priest or spiritual father, attend also to those whom God has given you to instruct. Pay no attention if others may laugh at you for

your faltering steps in Christian living, and never be idle—when you are, the evil one moves in.

The speaker concluded with an appeal to the young people present to take advantage of the pilgrimage to confess their sins, partake of Holy Communion, and receive spiritual guidance for a new start in life.

The next lecture was that of Hieromonk Seraphim:

ORTHODOX CHRISTIANS FACING THE 1980'S

The main purpose of Hieromonk Seraphim's talk was to make Orthodox Christians aware of the times in which they live and prepare them to make a true Christian response to the problems of these times.

After an introduction in which he set forth the warnings of two 19th-century Orthodox prophets of our present critical situation—Bishop Theophan the Recluse and St. John of Kronstadt—Fr. Seraphim gave a brief diagnosis of the present state of mankind: in the secular world, the running down of modern technological and economic "progress" in the numerous "crises" of our days in energy, strikes and violence in the free world, terror and slavery in the communist world, and the literal "monsters" being produced by scientific experiments; in religion, the enormous proportions already taken by the charismatic and occult revivals which have established contact with a "spiritual" world that is remote from real Christianity.

On the basis of this diagnosis, he then made a prognosis for the decade ahead: Communism, if nothing stops it, will spread to the rest of the world, it being the most obvious sign of the spiritual emptiness of contemporary mankind. However, Communism by itself, because it has no believable ideology, cannot unify the world but can only unleash a terrible time of wars and disorders such as the world has never seen (the recent Chinese-Vietnamese-Cambodian conflict and literal genocide being already a preview of this). To prepare spiritually to face the challenge of Communism, we must learn to value and make use of the precious *freedom* which has been given us as our special talent; we must recognize the reality of Communism, not primarily as a political system but as a spiritual plague of our times, and in the face of its closeness deepen our own spiritual awareness and life; we must become informed of the foundations of our Orthodox faith, which is the answer to Communism, and make maximum use of the books (Scripture, Lives of Saints, Holy Fathers) which may be taken away from us soon, learning the living wisdom which they contain and which will enable us

to be witnesses of Christ even under Communism; we should become informed of how Christians are living *now* under Communism, especially in Russia, both in order to be able to help them and in order to learn from them how to survive in such conditions. A number of periodicals and bulletins were displayed as a sample of how easy it actually is today to be informed about life under Communist rule (*The Orthodox Monitor, Religion in Communist Dominated Countries, Keston News Service, Aid to the Russian Church,* the publications of Pastor Wurmbrand, etc.).

The second reality facing us in the years ahead, the speaker continued, is the rapid spread of the non-Christian religious experiences which have produced the increasingly spectacular "paranormal" or "miraculous" phenomena of our days. This is another sign of the spiritual emptiness of our times, and it is trying to give a "spiritual" foundation for the "one world" of tomorrow (something that Communism cannot offer). Many of these "paranormal" phenomena are bound up with the activity of demons, which has become more open now than at any time in modern history, and this increasingly bold demonic activity will undoubtedly be one of the major characteristics of the 1980's. The frightful massacre at Jonestown, where the cult leader claimed to receive instructions from "discarnate entities" in outer space, is probably only the beginning of the spectacular "religious" events of the 1980's.

But even this increasing activity of demons has its positive side, Fr. Seraphim emphasized: the very boldness of this activity can awaken men to the reality of the demonic world and therefore arouse Christians to spiritual vigilance and struggle and bring unbelievers to Christ.

Next, the speaker discussed the specific situation of the Orthodox Church now and in the years just ahead. The first and most obvious characteristic of the Orthodox world today is the spirit of worldliness which has led to the gradual diluting and "modernizing" of Orthodox attitudes and practice and the loss of the sense of difference between Orthodoxy and heterodoxy. The offspring of this spirit, the ecumenical movement, may well reach its goal in the 1980's: the union with Rome and other Western confessions—a union not in the truth, but on the basis of compromises in faith and on a "common Christianity" born of human reason and not of Christ. Our practical response to the ecumenical movement has been laid down for us by the bishops of our Russian Church Outside of Russia: we do not participate in this movement, and our Metropolitan has warned the bishops of the other Orthodox Churches of the disastrous results of their ecumenical course if they con-

tinue it; our position to some extent isolates us from the other Orthodox Churches, but at the same time our bishops have refused to cut off all contact and communion with them. But thus our Russian Church Abroad has suffered attacks both from the "left" side and the "right": on the "left," Orthodox ecumenists accuse us of being "uncharitable" and "behind the times" for not relaxing our Orthodox standards to keep up with the liberal current of the times; and on the "right" side, some extreme groups think we are as bad as the ecumenists because we refuse to declare all other Orthodox Churches to be already fallen and without the grace of God. The question of "strictness" in Orthodoxy has already produced schism after schism among the old calendarist Churches of the Greek-speaking world, and one old-calendar bishop (who belongs to the most moderate group) speaks openly of the "correctness disease" which has caused incalculable harm to Orthodoxy in Greece: when people quote canons, Fathers, the Typicon, without love and tolerance and awareness of their own shortcomings, but solely in order to prove they are "correct" and everyone else is wrong. This can be a temptation to American and European converts to Orthodoxy also: with our calculating, rationalistic minds, we can easily think we are being zealous and strict, when actually we are only indulging our passion for self-righteousness and uncharitable criticism.

A more positive characteristic of Orthodoxy today is the movement of conversion to Orthodoxy which will undoubtedly become greater in the decade ahead as Western people find out about the Orthodox Church and come to her, fleeing from the modernism of the Western confessions, from the demonic world of occultism, or simply from unbelief. The Orthodox missionary movement in the West will probably remain comparatively small, but Orthodoxy in black Africa has become a major movement, attracting many thousands of converts in Uganda, Kenya, Tanzania, Zaire, and other African countries. Orthodoxy in Africa has a simplicity often lacking in our "complicated" American and European converts; the speaker read a letter recently received from Uganda which revealed something of the heart-felt fervor of these new Christians (printed in "Letters," *The Orthodox Word*, no. 87).

Another positive aspect of Orthodoxy today, and one that will probably occupy the center of Orthodox attention in the 1980's, is the religious revival in Russia. No one can now doubt the reality of this revival—thousands of adult converts are being baptized in the Orthodox Church, and there is even a strong movement of sympathy for the Orthodox monarchy, part of the

return of the Russian people to its own roots. Of course, there is much that is not Orthodox in this revival also: many Protestant groups are growing, and among some of the Orthodox there is a movement of renovationism close in spirit to the "Living Church" of the 1920's, and the books of the emigre modernists (Berdyaev, Bulgakov, etc.) are widely read. Therefore, one cannot say for certain that we are seeing the beginning of the true restoration of Orthodoxy in Russia which some 19th-century prophets have forseen as occurring just before the end of the world.

Nevertheless, in the truly Orthodox voices of Russia we can find something most instructive and inspiring for us in the free world. Nobody speaks so directly to the believing Orthodox heart today as Fr. Dimitry Dudko, and his message is addressed as much to Orthodox Christians abroad as to his fellow Russians. He has no general "answers" to the terrible spiritual problems facing Russia and the world—in particular, the damage done to the human soul by atheism and unbelief, and the betrayal of the Christian conscience by the "official" church leadership in Russia—but when he says that we must stand at Golgotha with the crucified Christ, his words have a power and convincingness lacking in most Orthodox teachers today. Leaving the West its "spirituality with comfort," he calls on the Orthodox people to bring spiritual fruits from their terrible sufferings and from the blood of their martyrs.

His words are a trumpet call, not only to his fellow Russians, but to all of us Orthodox Christians in the free world, who are indeed far too satisfied and "comfortable" with our feeble Christianity. Are we content to have beautiful churches and chanting; do we perhaps boast that we keep the fasts and the church calendar, have "good icons" and "congregational singing," that we give to the poor and perhaps tithe to the Church? Do we delight in exalted patristic teachings and theological discussions without having in our hearts the simplicity of Christ and true compassion for the suffering?—then ours is a "spirituality with comfort," and we will not have the spiritual fruits that will be exhibited by those without all these "comforts" who deeply suffer and struggle for Christ. The recovery of faith in Russia by men like Fr. Dimitry is probably the most *alive* thing in the Orthodox world today, and it can inspire us to treasure our own faith all the more and increase the talent which God has given us to speak the truth of Orthodoxy in freedom.

In conclusion, the speaker described the approaching 1980's as a "pre-apocalyptic" period, in that the tendencies he sees there are those we should expect to see completed with the coming of Antichrist and the end

of this world. He set as the most important task before Orthodox Christians today the *Christian enlightenment of ourselves and others* by drinking deeply of the Orthodox sources, becoming aware of the struggles and sufferings of our fellow Orthodox today, and learning to see how God acts in our lives. Many, even in this time of false religions, are thirsting for the truth of Orthodoxy, and if we ourselves have a living and deep Orthodoxy and a conscious Orthodox philosophy of life based on it, we can help to communicate it to them. And only thus can we *know the true Christ* in our time of deception, and recognize the false Christ (Antichrist) when he appears. We must be Orthodox not merely intellectually and outwardly, but with our whole heart, which must be warm, loving, and simple; those who are merely "correct" and "orthodox" in externals, but not deeply Christian in heart, will also follow Antichrist. We are all called to be witnesses of the true Christianity which, even in these evil times, exists for the salvation of all mankind.

MOUNT ATHOS TODAY

By now it was time for Vespers, followed by supper, a typically monastic meal, and then a slide talk on Mt. Athos by Hieromonk Herman, who had been fortunate this last May to be able to make a pilgrimage to the Holy Mountain in order to see his spiritual father, Schema-monk Nikodim of Karoulia, and work over with him the manuscript for a book on the latter's elder, Schema-hieromonk Theodosius. The account of this pilgrimage, with God's help, will be serialized in future issues of *The Orthodox Word*.

Mt. Athos is surprisingly prosperous today, in spite of the fierce attack of ecumenism against Orthodoxy on all fronts, not only because more and more young men are joining the holy communities of Athos, but also because the older generation of monks (at least up to now), who are the living link with the thousand-year-old Athonite tradition, conscientiously *do not give in* to the spirit of the times, concerning which the holy Bishop Ignatius Branchaninov speaks so lucidly to our age, and they manage to breathe into the new generation a distrust for the spirit of Western rationalism so prevalent in all Orthodox Churches today. This preservation of the Athonite spirit is quite remarkable and is evident in such facts as the following: many idiorhythmic monasteries are becoming coenobitic; now *all* the monasteries adhere to the Julian ("Old") Calendar; the attraction for the once-fashionable theological trend of Bulgakov, Berdyaev, and the "Paris" school in general, is on the wane; extreme movements both of the "left" and the "right" have

been rejected and have little influence, to mention just a few positive signs.

In connection with the latter point, the "renovationism" of some of the new-calendar churches has no sympathizers on the Holy Mountain; but the false "traditionalism" of some old calendarist groups has also been rejected. There are still genuine "zealots" on Mt. Athos, and the largest old calendarist Church in Greece itself maintains a sound conservatism which is very close to that of the Russian Church Abroad; but unfortunately, the reaction against ecumenism and renovationism in Greece has also produced some extreme groups who regard even the main body of Old Calendarists as "apostate" and spread slanders and ill-will against all who disagree with their own "correct" position. This over-reaction on the "right" side, with its name-calling and schisms, has caused the old-calendarist movement as a whole to lose influence on Mt. Athos; but there is still much silent support on the Holy Mountain for the main body of Old Calendarists, who have learned through their many sufferings not to be so confident in their own "correctness" and to have sympathy and love and compassion for the rest of the Orthodox Christians.

However, as against these positive signs, a possible new danger on the Holy Mountain lies in the over-valuation of theological education in secular universities, where the spirit of "spiritual" ecumenism (spread widely now by some Orthodox as well as Roman Catholic writers might undermine the age-old authority of the uncompromising Athonite tradition.

Virtually all the monks of Mt. Athos are exceedingly warm, cheerful, friendly, and genuinely sober, due probably to their deep roots in genuine Christianity. The ancient monasteries on Mt. Athos, as well as at Meteora, where Father Herman was fortunate to spend a few days, are truly enclosures of heaven on earth and are of inestimable value to those who are not seeking to be overwhelmed by the externals of art and music alone, but wish to see in them the inner bastion of Christianity. Father Herman visited most of the twenty coenobitic monasteries, many sketes, and single kellias, but most of the time he spent at the wonderful Skete of St. Elias, which was founded by the Blessed Paisius Velichkovsky, whose full biography had just been published by the St. Herman of Alaska Monastery Press. Father Herman regarded that it was Blessed Paisius who made this pilgrimage possible and almost miraculously successful.

(*Continued on page 89*)

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copy if you find it.
Thank you

SAINT TIKHON OF KALUGA

Commemorated June 16

TROPARION, TONE 4

As a most bright luminary wast thou made manifest in the Russian land,* O our holy Father Tikhon:* thou didst settle in the wilderness,* and leading there a strict way of life, thou didst dwell like a fleshless one,* wherefore God did enrich thee with the gift of miracles.* And so we, hastening to the shrine of thy relics,* say in contrition:* O holy Father,* entreat Christ God that our souls may be saved.

THE LIFE OF

St. Tikhon of Kaluga

Condensed chiefly from the Life published by I. A. Morozov, Moscow, 1907, with a description of St. Tikhon's Monastery.

The land where St. Tikhon selected a spot for his desert-dwelling was in those days an extremely beautiful and serene territory. Tranquil nature, untouched by man perhaps from the very time of God's creation, surely must have reminded the holy man of God of his Creator. According to the local tradition, St. Tikhon's native land was Kiev, and apparently even in his childhood he was of a monastic inclination in the spirit of the desert-lovng Kiev Caves. Evidently he fled north to escape the Tatar nomads and their menace, as many others did then, when Moscow was a free Christian territory and formed a society built on the principles of Orthodox Byzantium.

Having come to Moscow, St. Tikhon entered the renowned Chudov monastery, which had been built in 1365 by St. Alexi, the holy Metropolitan of the northern capital and a friend of St. Sergius of Radonezh. There, close to the place of St. Sergius' struggles, St. Tikhon matured and was tonsured with the name of Tikhon, being named after the Saint of Amathus in Cyprus, who is commemorated on June 16. He took upon himself the yoke of Christ at a young age, but did not stay long in this monastery. Longing for the solitary life, or perhaps being judged ready for it with his abba's blessing, St. Tikhon left the noisy capital and went deep into the wild country of the Kaluga and Medin region, then covered with dense, impenetrable forests.

What was the soul of St. Tikhon seeking in these wilds?

The monastic ideal of the desert Fathers, upon which the whole of Russian civilization was nurtured, presented itself as a realistic possibility in this vastness of God's natural wilderness, where no vain or worldly interruption could penetrate to shatter the silence of prayer—this union between man and his Creator, Who made the whole world for man so that he might find the purpose of his life and come to know himself. The ascetic world-

view of the men of the Northern Thebaid, to which St. Tikhon belongs, involves the forcing of the inner man to action; it was never a merely passive contemplation. A man going into the desert is a soldier going to a battle-field with his ancient yet immediate enemy, the devil; and the seclusion and all the deprivations he finds there are his indispensable weapons.

The country into which St. Tikhon withdrew, part of the lands of Prince Yaroslav, one of the sons of Vladimir Andreevich the Brave, was at that time covered with dense forest, adorned with immense oaks. The Saint chose for his secluded dwelling a place on the shore of the river Vepreika, and there he settled in the hollow of a huge oak tree. His food was the local wild plants, and his drink was the water from the spring which he himself dug out near the source of the river.

In undisturbed silence, in fasting and constant prayer, the saint spent his days, valiantly enduring cold and heat, snow, rain and the roaring storms that frightfully rage at times and mercilessly uproot age-old trees. He would be hiding in the bosom of the earth or roaming the woods like a wild beast deeply engaged in the purpose of his exile. The trees, the plants and the living creatures which abounded there, the beasts and the birds, were the object of his unavoidable observation, and the stars at night gave him to wonder at the grandeur and purpose of life. Undoubtedly the Psalter was his companion, wherein such words would strike a familiar chord:

"O Lord, our Lord, how wonderful is Thy name in all the earth. For Thy magnificence is lifted high above the heavens . . .

"For I will behold the heavens, the words of Thy fingers, the moon and the stars, which Thou hast founded.

"What is man, that Thou art mindful of him? Or the son of man, that Thou visitest him? Thou hast made him a little lower than the angels; with glory and honor hast Thou crowned him, and Thou hast set him over the works of Thy hands.

"All things hast Thou subjected under his feet, sheep, and all oxen, yea, and the beasts of the field. The birds of the air and the fish of the sea . . . O Lord, our Lord, how wonderful is Thy name in all the earth." (Psalm 8.)

Not enduring the sight of such a life, equal to the angels, the enemy of our salvation armed himself in various ways against the pleaser of God; but, being conquered by him many times in spiritual battles and struggles, he decided finally to drive the Saint away from the place of his struggles by means of offences from outside.

SAINT TIKHON OF KALUGA

The owner of the forest in which St. Tikhon struggled was once hunting wild beasts there, and unexpectedly—or perhaps on purpose—he came across the man of God. Looking at the Saint fiercely, he threatened him and ordered him immediately to leave his property. Not being satisfied with this, the owner even dared to raise against the Saint the whip that was in his hand. But the hand raised against the God-pleaser suddenly became numb and remained unmoving. Brought to his senses by such a chastisement, and understanding the power of God, the proud landowner repented of his act and humbly asked the Saint's forgiveness. Receiving healing by the Saint's prayer, he changed his anger to mercy, fervently entreating the desert-dweller to remain for good on his property and to build there a monastery for his disciples, promising to furnish the monastery generously with everything necessary.

This happened at the time when, by God's Providence, St. Tikhon's desert-dwelling had been discovered by the local inhabitants, and the fame of his struggles had drawn to him zealots of the desert life.

The Saint immediately undertook the building of a monastery dedicated to the all-honorable Dormition of the Mother of God. Having gathered disciples in it, he was their instructor and guided them with humility of wisdom, for he was meek in manner and kind of heart. Following the meek Shepherd Christ, the Saint fed the hungry and gave the thirsty to drink, received strangers, interceded for the offended. The church service to St. Tikhon fittingly calls him "praise of fasters, glory of monastics, adornment of the wilderness." And, in depicting the fullness of his spiritual gifts, one of the canticles of the Canon at Matins speaks of him thus: "Having thee, O Father Tikhon, as in truth a firm struggler and vigilant intercessor, who among men can enumerate thy struggles? But being convinced by thy love, we yet cry out to thee: Rejoice, for thou didst live like an angel on earth, didst restrain thy tongue by silence, wast vouchsafed the good life, didst attain the height of virtues and receive the illumination of the Holy Spirit."

St. Tikhon died in deep old age, being adorned with the gray hairs of his age and of spiritual wisdom, in the year 1492, in the reign of the Great Prince John III Vasilievich.

HIS DISCIPLES

Unfortunately, almost nothing is known of the disciples of St. Tikhon. One of the first disciples was Nicephorus, of whom no information has been preserved, but who, as old residents of Kaluga testify, before the great Kaluga fire in the 19th century, was depicted in ancient icons in the city's

churches together with Sts. Paphnutius of Borov and Tikhon of Kaluga. It is supposed that this first disciple of St. Tikhon was the founder of the Hermitage of the Saviour on the mouth of the Ugra river, which is located not far from St. Tikhon's monastery and was closed in 1764.

Another disciple was the holy Philaret, about whom also nothing was generally known until the end of the 19th century, when Fr. Gerasim of St. Tikhon's monastery (originally of Optina) discovered something about his life. This information comes to us through yet another monk of St. Tikhon's monastery, also named Gerasim (of Spruce Island in Alaska), in his notes. He writes:

"In the St. Tikhon monastery there lived the great ascetic, Fr. Gerasim. He conceived the idea of building a women's convent about eight miles from St. Tikhon's monastery. Good people had already given him the land; it was a very beautiful place and suitable for a monastery. Fr. Gerasim made a petition to the Holy Synod asking permission for him to begin building a monastery in honor of the Iviron Mother of God. For a long time there was no answer from the Synod, and the Elder already began to think that his good intention was not to be realized.

"One beautiful spring day he went to the place where he intended to build the monastery. He prayed fervently at the forest meadow and after prayer lay down on the green grass and fell asleep. In a dream he saw a tall monk in the schema, with a noble appearance, come up to him and say: 'Do not grieve, Father, but hurry to the monastery; they are waiting for you there—the papers have come from the Synod.'

" 'And who are you, Father?! Fr. Gerasim asked the monk.

" 'I am the disciple of St. Tikhon, Schema-monk Philaret, and my grave is there.' He pointed to his grave.

"Fr. Gerasim woke up, gave thanks to the Lord for His wondrous and consoling dream, and prayed fervently, at the place indicated by the monk, for the repose of the soul of Schema-monk Philaret. He hastened to the monastery, and what did he find? They were waiting for him; a package had arrived from the Synod, and a blessing had been given for the building of a holy monastery.

"I myself was in that holy monastery, and I also prayed at the grave of Schema-monk Philaret. Fr. Gerasim built a chapel over it and an ever-burning icon lamp illuminated it. Up to then no one had known that a disciple of St. Tikhon was lying there. He told about himself, and that it is true that he was Monk Philaret is verified by the fact that he informed

(*Continued on page* 77)

Three Feasts of the Gospel

2. THE BEHEADING OF ST. JOHN THE FORERUNNER AND BAPTIST OF THE LORD

". . . Having suffered for the truth, thou hast gone rejoicing to declare to those in hell the good tidings of God having appeared in the flesh . . ."
Troparion of the Feast, Aug. 29

The whole life of St. John the Forerunner from its first days was entirely dedicated to the One Who came after him. In the days when the infants were massacred in Bethlehem he was also sought by Herod, and his mother Elizabeth fled with him into the desert, where on the fortieth day she died. His father Zacharias was killed at the same time by the servants of Herod in the Temple. The desert raised up John, and he remained in it in silence for thirty years, when *the word of God came unto* him, commanding him to preach repentence and call on men to prepare the way of the Lord (Luke 3:2).

Having prepared the minds of the Jews to expect the speedy coming of the Messiah, and having gathered around himself disciples, of whom many later became the first disciples of Christ, John the Baptist, half a year after the beginning of his ministry, baptized Christ and was a witness of the mystery of the Holy Trinity which was then revealed. Having indicated to

those who were with him the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world, John began to depart into the shadows, and everyone began to go to the new Teacher.

But John, far from grieving over this, rejoiced. When his especially devoted disciples spoke to him of this, grieving over the decreasing fame of their teacher, he replied with words that clearly expressed his personality. *I am not the Christ, but I am sent before Him. He that hath the bride is the bridegroom: but the friend of the bridegroom, which standeth and heareth him, rejoiceth greatly because of the bridegroom's voice: this my joy therefore is fulfilled. He must increase, but I must decrease* (John 3:28-30).

Soon after this there thundered forth his word accusing Herod, for which he was cast into prison, where he ended his earthly life, being beheaded during Herod's banquet.

The beheading of St. John the Baptist, which cut off his earthly life, at the same time placed a beginning to his new and glorious ministry as Forerunner.

The soul of St. John the Baptist, departing his ascetic body, went to the place where the souls of all those who died before the Saviour's death on the Cross went: to hell, in which were the souls of everyone beginning from Adam.

However, the holy and righteous soul of St. John the Baptist did not go there in order to experience a dark condition of alienation and distance from God. The "friend of the Bridegroom," who had baptized Him and suffered for righteousness, bore in himself the hope of the coming Kingdom of God which he had preached to all, preparing the way of Him Who cometh, and was inseparably bound to Him in his devotion, testifying everywhere of Christ as His messenger, sent before His face.

Having descended to hell, John continued the ministry which he had performed on earth—the preaching of the drawing near of the Kingdom of God. The souls of the Old Testament righteous ones were languishing in hell, awaiting the fulfillment of what had been said by God to Adam about the coming of the One Who would conquer the serpent. The prophets who had seen beforehand in spirit the coming of the Messiah awaited the fulfillment of the revelations which had been made to them. To them, deprived of the light of God's glory, tormented with waiting for the fulfillment of their hope, came John, having descended to hell, bringing the joyful tidings that soon the kingdom of hell would be destroyed, and those who awaited the Redeemer would soon behold Him and be liberated by Him. He testified

that the Son of God had already come to earth and that he himself, baptizing Him, had seen the Holy Spirit descending and remaining on Him (John 1:33-34).

The preaching of John concerning the coming of the Messiah was addressed not only to the souls of the righteous, but to all who were in hell. He appeared in hell to prepare the way of the Lord, just as he had prepared it on earth. The descent to hell of John the Baptist was the proclamation of joy to those who were languishing there, by the preaching of the Gospel in hell.

The souls of all the dead, save for the most inveterate sinners, heeded the preaching of the Baptist. Therefore, when Christ descended to hell after His death on the Cross, He was greeted not only by the Old Testament righteous ones, but also by the souls of those who once were disobedient and opposed the long sufferring of God in the days of Noah and during the rest of the time that sin reigned among men (I Peter 3.20).

Hell was destroyed by the descent into it of the soul of Christ; the dark confinement shone with light; the souls of the reposed were led into the Kingdom of Heaven. The entry-way to this ruin of hell was the descent into it of the Baptist. Having fulfilled his ministry as Forerunner on earth, he appeared as the Forerunner of Christ in hell. His beheading is not only the culmination of his earthly exploit, but also the beginning of a new and glorious ministry.

Among them that are born of women there hath not risen a greater than John the Baptist (Matt. 11:11; Luke 7:28), Christ said of him. *This is he, of whom it is written, Behold, I send my messenger before Thy face, which shall prepare Thy way before Thee* (Luke 7:27).

These words of the Lord Himself testify of the spiritual greatness of John and his high purpose in the work of the salvation of the human race. He appeared as the servant and preacher of God as no other single man in the world, having begun to preach and praise Christ before his birth, and finishing it even after his death, ascending with Christ into the Kingdom of Heaven after the destruction of hell. As the greatest of the righteous, a worthy place was prepared for him in the Kingdom of his Friend, where he remains now, awaiting its revelation in all glory and the triumphant feast of the Lamb of God in the Second Coming, when He will *gather His wheat into the garner, but He will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire* (Matt. 3.12; Luke 3.17).

His beheading was his final exploit on earth, and the last step for the receiving of the greatest reward in the Kingdom of Heaven; while for

all those in hell it was the rising of the morning star before the appearance of the Sun of Righteousness.

Just as the nativity of St. John the Forerunner and Baptist is the beginning of the Gospel for the living, so is his beheading the beginning of the Gospel for the dead. "The glorious beheading of the Forerunner is part of a certain Divine dispensation, for he preached to those in hell the coming of the Saviour" (Kontakion of the Feast). "Be glad, O Baptist, and let thy spirit dance: for thou dost accuse the godless Herod, and dost preach to those in hell, saying: Our salvation hath drawn near" (Canticle 4 of the Canon).

"He who came before Thy Birth and Thy Divine Passion is, through a sword, in the nethermost parts of the earth. John, the prophet and messenger of Thy descent there, cries as the voice of the Word: Do ye dead, as Giver of life, do ye blind, as Giver of light, do ye prisoners, as Deliverer, exalt Christ above all forever." (Canticle 8 of the Canon).

The New Martyrs of Kaluga

By Archimandrite Gerasim

FATHER IOASAPH

In the monastery of St. Tikhon I had a most kind elder, Fr. Ioasaph, in the world John Nekrasov. He brilliantly finished the course of the Tula seminary; he was the son of a priest and a relative of Metropolitan Isidore. After finishing the course he began working at th Holy Synod. But he was inclined to monastery life and visited old Valaam. He could not stay there, however, as the damp climate was bad for him and he suffered with fever. He returned to St. Petersburg, resigned his post, and went to Moscow to seek a monastery.

He entered the St. Nicholas of Ugresh monastery and stayed there for three years. The brothers in our Russian monasteries were mostly peasants, and most of the superiors were also. Some of them were crude, lovers of authority, and did not like educated people. And it was because of the crudeness of the Archimandrite that Brother John Nekrasov left this monastery and hastened to Optina monastery, which at this time was renowned throughout Russia for its elders.

Brother John came to Optina and went to Elder Macarius for counsel. Fr. Macarius listened to him and then told him: "Go, Brother John, to St. Tikhon's monastery, and finish your earthly life there." And so he went there and was tonsured with the name Ioasaph, and lived there more than fifty years. He did not accept the priesthood, even though more than one bishop of Kaluga offered it to him. He became a martyr soon after the Revolution. He died on January 2, 1919, on the feast of St. Seraphim, after the brothers had already been banished from the monastery. And as the last abbot of the monastery. Fr. Jonah, wrote me, he died of starvation.

Fr. Ioasaph was a doer of the mental Jesus Prayer, and he was a clairvoyant elder. Two years before I left St. Tikhon's monastery, he told me: "Misha, a learned hierarch will meet you, will take a liking to you,

and soon you will receive everything like a learned man." Such words he repeated several times.

But at that time could I, the poor novice Michael, even think that a learned bishop would come to like me? Indeed, I was afraid of bishops; my hands trembled as I held the service book when I served in the altar for a bishop. But still, everything Elder Ioasaph told me came to pass.

In 1912 I returned from Athos and stayed in Tula, where the monastic metochion of Bishop Evdokim was located. There were only a few brothers there; no one wished to live in a poor, unorganized monastery. I stayed, and Vladika gave me my favorite obedience—that of sacristan. True, there was a lot of work. The church was immense. I loved icon lamps and adorned the whole church with them. I lived there in peace and quiet. The people in Tula were good, believing people. Vladika Evdokim liked me and entrusted the whole church and sacristy to me. Our services were solemn. In 1914 four altars were consecrated, and the cathedral was beautiful.

Vladika often visited my cell and conversed with me for hours. We talked of building a bell-tower and cells for the brothers. But unexpectedly, June 31, 1914, Vladika was assigned to North America.

And so the words of Elder Ioasaph were fulfilled. I was tonsured in my 27th year; in fact, I received everything that same year: monasticism, the diaconate, and the priesthood.

FATHER JOB

At one time in St. Tikhon's monastery a school of icon-painting was opened, and a teacher was asked to come from Moscow. He came with his son. When students began to be chosen from among the novices, I was one of them. With me there was also th novice John Pamphilov, a peasant of Tula province, who soon learned to paint icons very well. He had a talent for this. He was a splendid man and a good monk.

The Bolsheviks banished him to Siberia after our monastery was closed. At first he lived for twelve years with his mother, Bassa, an old woman, who very much wanted to die in her native town of Tula, where she had sons and daughters and where many of her relatives were buried in the cemetery. He brought her there, visited his St. Tikhon monastery, where there was no one left and everything had been desecrated by the atheists. Some of the brothers lived in villages and towns or worked at something; the old ones lived on handouts and had no corner of their own. He was caught and again sent to Siberia.

NEW MARTYRS OF KALUGA

When he returned to Siberia, he heard that his mother had died, and it was then that I received my last letter from him. He died a martyr's death in poverty somewhere in Siberia as a hieromonk, emulating his much-suffering patron saint.

FATHER ZOSIMA

Already in the first years of the Revolution Fr. Job wrote about the martyred Elder Zosima, who lived in a cabin in the forest beyond the monastery:

"We have had new martyrs among us after the overthrow of the Tsar. Some hooligans tied up Elder Zosima and burned his forest cabin. His burned bones were brought to the monastery. Our brothers were all the time working on the farm, doing the work themselves. In the autumn they began to bring to the monastery whatever was gathered during the summer, and some young hoodlums attacked them and beat them up terribly. Some of them are crippled for life. They did inhuman things to the defenseless monks, tearing out the hair on their heads and beards . . . And many have already departed into another world." And similar frightful things have occured all over Russia.

Holy new martyrs of Kaluga, pray to God for us!

THE LIFE OF ST. TIKHON

(Continued from page 70)

about the arrival of the papers from the Synod and that they were waiting for him in the monastery.

"Fr. Gerasim soon built there a splendid women's convent (where Abbess Sophia, the later new martyr, placed the beginning of her monastic life).

"The whole trouble with us is that we undertake everything coldly; although it is true that nuns seemed to have built their convents quickly, and they grew rapidly." (From a letter of Fr. Gerasim, June 2, 1941.)

St. Tikhon's monastery was destroyed in 1610, apparently by a robber band or by Polish troops during the Time of Troubles. Before this disturbance there had been two churches in the monastery: the catholicon, a wooden church dedicated to the Dormition of the Theotokos, with a wing to St. Nicholas; and another wooden church dedicated to the Three Hierarchs.

By 1630 new churches had been built and the monastery restored.

In the 18th century the monastery was a dependency of other larger monasteries, but in the 19th century it became once more an independent monastery and its state was much improved, both inwardly and outwardly.

MIRACLES

There have been many miracles from St. Tikhon's spiritual intercession, especially in the period from about 100 years ago, when the monks and elders of Optina monastery took pains to restore the spiritual life in St. Tikhon's monastery. Elder Moses put special love into this holy work and many times used to send Elder Leonid with his discpiles there. Elder Anthony sent there his spiritual son, Schema-monk Sergius (Simeon Yanovsky), who had originally been converted by St. Herman of Alaska. Fr. Sergius spent his last days there, when he had become blind. One day, while venerating the reliquary of St. Tikhon, his blindness suddenly vanished and he beheld the icon of the Saint and his blessing hand.

Not long after Fr. Sergius' repose (in 1876), the future guardian of the relics of St. Herman on Spruce Island, Archimandrite Gerasim, then a young boy, came to receive miraculous help from St. Tikhon Below we give again the words of Fr. Gerasim, who later became a novice in St. Tikhon's monastery and took care of the grave of Father Sergius Yanovsky, the disciple of St. Herman of Alaska.

"In my youth I fell into a river early in the spring and caught a bad cold. I had frightful pains in the joints of my legs. In the morning I would be unable to unbend my joints; the pain was frightful, and I would cry.

"One splendid summer we went on foot to the monastery of St. Tikhon of Kaluga, which was about fifty miles from our city. I can tell you that for me this was a great labor. At times I could hardly walk; the pain in my knees tormented me.

"In St. Tikhon's monastery there is the healing well of St. Tikhon a mile or more from the monastery. The water is fresh, clear as crystal. and frightfully cold.

"Going there, I undressed, prayed, and began to immerse myself in the water. At first a powerful pain burned me, but I still went into the water and immersed myself three times over my head, and then went out to where all the pilgrims were dressing. An unearthly joy took possession of me, of my soul, and I became joyful and happy. The pain had vanished. Returning home, I walked rapidly and even carried my mother's and aunt's purses. And afterwards for many years I had no pain in my legs."

THE ORTHODOX WORD
AT THE WELL OF ST. TIKHON

A Healing from Deafness

Ivan Yakovlevich Baranov, a peasant of Kaluga province, village of Bulgakovo, in the year 1908 was sick for over nine months with deafness and noise in the ears. The physicians recommended an operation, but he refused it; the usual medical help produced no alleviation of the sufferings of Baranov, and the physicians finally refused entirely to treat him.

On September 12, 1908, Baranov came to the monastery to St. Tikhon the Wonderworker. He stayed in the guest-house, stood through the Liturgy and a moleban to the God-pleaser, venerated the shrine of his relics, and later went to the holy well, immersed himself there in the healing waters, and stood for a moleben to St. Tikhon.

His wife was with him. On the way back from the spring to the monastery, Baranov suddenly felt better and told his wife that the cotton had fallen out of his ears and the ears had become completely well.

Baranov did not wish to make an official declaration of this, but St. Tikhon of Kaluga appeared to him in a dream and said: "Why did you forget me?—I am your doctor." As a result of this dream, he made a written declaration of this, which was witnessed by other persons.

The Miraculous Healing of a Nun

(Translated and condensed from the periodical, *The Russian Monk,* Pochaev Monastery, July 1912)

In 1901 there entered the St. Nicholas Convent in Kaluga province the novice Darya Andreyeva Selishcheva, a 16-year-old peasant girl from Orlov province. After some time in the convent, she experienced pains in the legs and stomach, and no treatment helped. Soon her legs became completely paralyzed and she was unable even to get out of bed by herself. For six years she lived in the convent in this state, accepting the help of two sisters for moving about.

In the autumn of 1907, Darya's grief was increased when she, together with her two helpers, was for some reason forced to leave the convent. Her loving sisters resolved to stay with her in her misfortunes and take care of her. They appealed to the abbot of St. Tikhon's monastery in Kaluga, Archimandrite Laurence, to be allowed to stay there at least until spring, and the abbot, with true Christian love, permitted them to stay in the guest-

house. The only consolation for the sufferer and the sisters who looked after her was to hasten in prayer to the Lord and His Saint, whose relics lay in the ground under his shrine in the monastery church.

The unfortunate sufferer began yet more forcefully to knock on the doors of God's mercy. With what words she poured out her grief, how many secret tears she shed, what she asked or hoped for—remain the secret of her own soul. But it is evident that her faith was great and her prayers flaming; and her very illness was for the glory of God, so that the works of God might be manifest in her.

May of 1908 came, and warm weather began. In this springtime the fervent prayers of the unfortunate one were offered up to God and His Saint. In these days the sufferer had a great desire to bathe in the healing waters of the well that had been dug by St. Tikhon himself. They waited for warm weather, and on May 12, after the early Liturgy, the sisters brought her to the well. They put her into the water with their own hands, bathed her, and in the same way brought her back to the monastery. In the evening of this day Darya unexpectedly declared to those around her that she felt better, her legs seemed to be regaining strength and life, and it was decided the next day to go the holy well again. On May 13, when they conducted her to the bathing place, she who for six years had never stood on her own feet began—O marvellous wonder!—to let herself down into the water with uncertain, weak steps. Having bathed, she felt even better and came out of the water herself with a firmer step and without any help. On May 14 novice Darya was already able to go the well—which was about two miles from the monastery—on foot; and having bathed for the third time, and giving thanks to the Lord and St. Tikhon for her healing, returned safely to the monastery, again on foot, and now felt herself completely healed. The pains in her stomach also went away, and her legs became so strong that she did not even feel tired. Everything that happened to her was as if in a dream, so unexpected and miraculous for her was this manifestation of God's mercy. Her joy is impossible to describe.

This striking miracle of God—the healing of an uncurably sick, paralyzed woman— is especially remarkable in our time of unbelief and moral decadence, when the open confession of God evokes in many at best a mocking smile, and in the majority a malicious feeling; at just this time the Lord reveals His might and power. Our atheists look with their eyes and do not see, and having ears do not hear, and with their hearts do not understand and are not coverted.

The present description of a miraculous healing is given out of the duty of every believer to tell to all how good is the Lord, and how great are His mercies to all who seek Him. Therefore, let us give glory and thanksgiving to the One God in Trinity, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, and likewise let us remember the name of our glorious intercessor and helper St. Tikhon, wonderworker of Kaluga. (With signatures of witnesses.)

The Soviet Press Testifies of Pilgrimages to St. Tikhon's Well in Our Days

(From an article by Alexei Rostov in the *Herald of Orthodox Action*. Geneva, December, 1959, pp. 27-28)

Testimony of the present state of St. Tikhon's well is contained in an article in the Soviet illustrated journal *Ogonyek* of July 12, 1959, by the Communist journalist N. N. Kruzhkov.

There it is related how right up to last year thousands of faithful flocked on June 16 by the old calendar, the feast of St. Tikhon of Kaluga, to the monastery founded by the Saint in the 15th century twelve miles from Kaluga, and how they prayed at the well dug by the Saint himself, taking from there the miraculous water which is revered by them. After the revolution the monastery was closed and a technical institute of rural economy was established in it. However, on the feast day of the Saint pilgrims still flock there and molebens are served by various priests, including "legal" priests. It should be noticed that this expression of the Soviet journalist indicates that in Russia the Communists themselves make a distinction between "legal" priests (that is, clergy belonging to the Patriarchate) and "illegal" (underground priests not recognizing the Patriarchate).

Despite the supposedly official tolerance of religion of the Soviet government, the authorities decided this year not to allow a pilgrimage and prayers at the holy well, and took the following measures in this regard: first of all, on the site of the well they built a water-pressure tower, from which water from the well flows out of the well to water the fields. But the Soviet engineers were either unable or unwilling to build the tower correctly so that it would capture all of the water of the well. Part of the water does not enter the tower, but flows out of the earth, and by God's will bursts through and runs in the midst of the bushes and grass in a fresh bubbling stream.

Then the Regional Committee of the Party ordered the 78-year-old Bishop Onisiphor of Kaluga and Borovsk, a man submissive to any order

of the atheists, to forbid his clergy to serve at the stream which had taken the place of the previous well. More than this, the compliant bishop ordered that in sermons the believers should be called on not to take part in the pious pilgrimage and prayer at the stream on the Saint's feast day, since this was not pleasing to the Regional Committee of the Party of the Bolsheviks.

The correspondent Kruzhkov himself went to check the result of these measures of the Regional Committee: would they by upheld by the "legal" clergy? Here is what he wrote:

"All the same, some people came; they gathered in groups nearby . . . Some had come from far, with many miles behind them; their travelling sacks were dusty, their faces tired. Here is one woman with a staff in her hand, barely creeping along, moving her feet. 'Where are you from, babushka?'—'From Orel, my dear. I'm terribly sick. The Saint will make me better!'"

Here is a clear testimony by an atheist journalist of the people's faith in the healing power of the spring water that flows out of the well dug by St. Tikhon!

Further, the author describes the pilgrims who had assembled with caution, out of fear of the Communists and secret police who undoubtedly were watching for them:

"Some teen-age girls ran past in a happy company, as if going to school or for an excursion, with vessels and milk bottles to take some 'holy water.' Evidently their elders sent them—for them it's inconvenient, but one can send girls to take it! A girl in a wide-brimmed hat, entirely contemporary in appearance, accompanied by a grim woman in a dark semi-monastic dress, went up to the stream, undressed, and began to bathe herself. What had brought her here? What power? What kind of healing was she expecting?

"An excursion bus from Kaluga brought about twenty old women... Having bathed and taken water in prosaic water bottles, they gathered on the slope . . . A strong, robust woman, who had come from Belorussia, looked around . . . 'Don't be afraid, matushka,' said one bold resident of Kaluga; 'I had mange; last year I immersed myself, and it was as though someone stripped it off with his hand. Where is the pain?' 'My stomach is bad.' 'It will help!'"

How one feels here fear before the authorities and the desire to take water and to cleanse one's suffering body without being noticed! Adults themselves sometimes fear to appear at the spring, but they send girls to take and bring home the holy water which in their eyes is miracle-working.

The legal clergy was absent because of the bishop's order, but it is possible that there had been someone to pray before the Soviet journalist and the secret police appeared at the stream; these latter, as we shall see, were to arrest underground priests if they began to serve molebens.

"Among the pilgrims jostling each other was an old man who called himself Father Boris. He was dressed in a thin jacket and trousers . . . There were no molebens (in the presence of a Soviet journalist and the secret police!) . . . On the eve of St. Tikhon's day there appeared in the village a certain Ivan Gudz, who had a service book and the appurtenances of church services. After seeing the circumstances, this swindler was in such a hurry to disappear that he even left his passport, from which it turns out that he is from the region of Rovensk, was born in 1897, and is temporarily living in the neighborhood of Detchinsk . . .

"It was thought that for Tikhon's day there would appear yet another expert in spiritual matters, a certain Nicholas Voropaev, a former stone excavator. It is well known that he has taken up an easier profession now: he secretly baptizes children and performs some kind of services which do not demand church knowledge . . . But he did not appear; Voropaev does his business in secret and does not want to be seen."

Kruzhkov is clearly vexed that the believers warned Father Nicholas, and the ambush prepared for him by the secret police was in vain!

"We stayed at the stream to dusk, and we counted altogether about 200 pilgrims."

Kruzhkov concludes his article with an appeal to the authorities to increase the battle against the underground Church, which takes advantage of "the people's darkness."

This article from *Ogonyek* testifies to the fact that now, in our days, our underground Church has revealed itself in the veneration of St. Tikhon of Kaluga on his feast day by a pilgrimage to his spring, which is venerated and miraculous right up to now. This Saint was comparatively little known even earlier in Holy Russia, and the veneration of his name was limited chiefly to the Kaluga diocese. However, even in 1959 the pilgrimage was of such a size that the atheist authorities took all police and propaganda measures to prevent the pilgrimage. But despite everything, not less than two hundred persons, according to the testimony of the enemies themselves, came to pray and take water from St. Tikhon's stream and immerse their afflicted bodies in it.

Letter from a New Martyr

A LETTER OF HIEROMONK NIKON OF OPTINA TO HIS MOTHER, 1922

The following letter, from a Russian new martyr who died in a Soviet concentration camp in 1927, was written in the first years of the Russian Revolution, when the full meaning of Soviet rule was not yet fully evident. With its sober tone and trust in God, it is a message for us today, on the eve of times perhaps no less difficult than his.

Christ is in our midst, dearest mother.

I fervently desire for you peace and joy in the Lord, and I ask your holy prayers and mother's blessing.

About myself, what can I write? I am alive and well, I have no particular needs, I receive everything I need, I labor a little as a secretary, I am very busy with various things in the monastery, or rather, things which touch in general on our common life: I sing on the cliros, and finally, I serve, standing before the holy altar of God.

As for my inward life, my cell and my soul, not everyone can know this. My cell is five yards long and three and a half wide, with one window. This cell is dearer to me than any sumptuous houses or halls.

As for the conditions of our common life, this is something which is complicated, but at the same time very simple: complicated, because it is difficult to put on paper what the former monastery is like now, and everything that we are experiencing and doing; but simple, because *except the Lord build the house, in vain do they labor that build it,* in the words of the Psalm

(Ps. 126:1). Yes, one must take the measures that are possible, prompted by common sense, which are not contrary to the Christian spirit and monastic life; but, in taking them, one must expect success entirely from the hand of the Lord.

Human pride says: We will do, we will attain—and we begin to build a tower of Babel, we demand of God an accounting for His actions, we desire to have the universe at our disposal, we dream of thrones beyond the clouds—but no one and nothing submits to us, and the powerlessness of man is demonstrated with all apparentness in bitter experience. Observing this experience in the history both of ancient, long-gone days, and of recent times, I have come to the conclusion that the ways of God's Providence are past finding out for us; we cannot understand them, and therefore we must with all humility give ourselves over to the will of God.

Then, secondly: No one and nothing can harm a man if he does not harm himself; on the contrary, if one does not avoid sin, a thousand means of salvation will not help him. Consequently, the only evil is sin: Judas fell while in the presence of the Saviour, but the righteous Lot was saved while living in Sodom. Such and similar thoughts come to me when I take instruction from the reading of the Holy Fathers and when I mentally glance upon my surroundings.

What will happen? How will it happen? When will it happen? If such-and-such happens, which way should one bend? If such-and-such happens, where can one find spiritual strength and consolation? O Lord, Lord! And a fierce perplexity takes hold of the soul when you wish to foresee everything in your mind, to penetrate into the mystery of the future which is unknown but somehow frightful. The mind becomes exhausted, and the plans and methods it has devised are a childish fantasy, a pleasant dream. A man wakes up, and everything has vanished, pushed away by harsh reality, and all one's plans are destroyed. Where is there hope? Our hope is in God.

The Lord is my hope and my refuge. By giving over myself and everything to the will of God, the will of God will be done in me, and it is always good and perfect. If I am God's, then the Lord will defend and console me. If for my benefit some temptation is sent to me—blessed be the Lord Who has arranged my salvation. Even in the midst of sorrows the Lord is mighty to give great and most glorious consolation . . . Thus do I think, thus do I feel, thus do I observe and believe.

From this do not think that I have experienced many sorrows and trials. No, it seems to me that I have not really seen any sorrows yet. If I

have gone through things which at a superficial glance seemed to be something sorrowful, they have not caused me any great pain of heart, have not caused any sorrow, and therefore I would not call them sorrows. But I do not close my eyes to what is happening and to the future, so as to prepare my soul for temptation, so that I might say in the words of the Psalm: "I prepared myself and was not disturbed."

I have told you that we had an investigation; they reviewed the business of our association. This investigation is not yet finished, and there has been no trial. When the trial will be, and how it will end—God knows. But, beyond any doubt, without the will of God nothing can happen either to me in particular or to us all in general, and therefore I am calm. And when one's soul is calm, what more can one seek?

Now I have come from the All-night Vigil and am finishing this letter, which I began before the Vigil. O Lord, what happiness! What marvellous words are proclaimed to us in church! Peace and quiet, the spirit of sanctity are sensibly felt in church. The Divine service ends, everyone goes to their homes, and I also come out of church.

A wondrous night, a light frost. The moon with its silvery rays drenches our quiet little corner. I go to the graves of the reposed Elders, bow down to them, ask their help in prayer, and for them I ask of the Lord eternal blessedness in heaven. These graves say much to our mind and heart; from these cold inscriptions there is a breath of warmth. Before the mental gaze of my mind there stand the wondrous images of reposed giants of the spirit.

During these days I have remembered Father Barsanuphius many times. I have remembered his words, the instruction which he gave me once—and perhaps more than once. He told me: "The Apostle exhorts: *Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith*" (II Cor. 13:15), and he continued: "Look at what the same apostle says: *I have finished my course, I have kept the faith; henceforth there is laid up for me a crown* (II Tim. 4:7-8). Yes, it is a great thing to keep, to preserve the faith. Therefore I also tell you: Examine yourselves, whether you are in the faith. If you keep the faith, you can have a good hope over your lot."

When the reposed Elder told me all this (and he spoke well, with enthusiasm; as far as I recall it was in the evening, by the quiet light of an icon-lamp in his dear, cozy elder's cell), I felt that he was saying something wondrous, exalted, spiritual. My mind and heart seized on his words with

eagerness. I had heard this utterance of the Apostle before, but it had not produced in me such a response, such an impression.

It seemed to me that "keeping the faith" was something special. I believe, and I believe in the Orthodox way; I have no doubts at all regarding faith. But here I felt that in this utterance there was something great—that indeed it is great, in spite of all temptations, all the experiences of life, all the offending things, to keep in one's heart the fire of holy faith unquenched, and unquenched even until death, for it is said: *I have finished my course,* that is, the whole of earthly life has already been lived, finished, the path which one had to travel has already been travelled, I am already at the boundary of earthly life, beyond the grave another life already begins, the life which has been prepared for me by my faith which I have kept. *I have finished my course, I have kept the faith.* And my wondrous Elder gave as his testament to me to test myself from time to time in the truths of the Orthodox faith, lest I might, unnoticed by myself, deviate from them. He advised me, among other things, to read the Orthodox Catechism of Metropolitan Philaret and to become acquainted with the "Confession of the Orthodox Faith of the Eastern Patriarchs."

Now, when the foundations of the Orthodox Russian Church have been shaken, I see how precious is this instruction of the Elder. Now, it seems, the time of testing has come, to see whether we are in the faith. Now one must also know that the faith can be kept by one who believes warmly and sincerely, to whom God is dearer than everything, and this latter can be true only in one who preserves himself from every sin, who preserves his moral life. O Lord, keep me in the faith by Thy grace!

The idea that the faith can be kept only with a good moral life is not my own; this is the teaching also of the Gospel and the Holy Fathers. Here is what it says in the Holy Gospel according to St. John, 3:19-21: *Light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. For every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reproved. But he that doeth truth cometh to the light, that his deeds may be made manifest, that they are wrought in God.*

Christ here calls Himself the Light. He tries to persuade the Jews of His time to abandon the search for honor from each other, while doing which a man is incapable of faith; but they only mocked . . . *How can ye believe,which receive honor one of another, and seek not the honor that cometh from God only?* (John 5:44).

And Bishop Ignatius Brianchaninov, indicating these words of the Gospel, says that. like other passions, the passion of vainglory annihilates faith in the human heart: like them, it makes the human heart incapable of faith in Christ, of confessing Christ . . . Therefore, I fervently entreat your holy prayers, that the Lord might preserve me from every evil—that is, from sin in all its forms—and then no outward situation will be able to harm me.

I only wished to tell you briefly that I am alive and well and, beyond my intentions, I was drawn into writing this. In writing this letter, I have scarcely been able to follow my thoughts and record what they have dictated to me. All this has somehow involuntarily poured out of my pen, and it represents my profound conviction.

May the Lord preserve us all.

I ask the holy prayers of all, and I myself, according to my own infirm powers, will always remember everyone in prayer. Forgive me.

May the grace of our Lord and God Jesus Christ, and the love of God the Father, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all. Amen.

November 15-16/28-29, 1922. Optina Monastery.
It is already two o'clock at night.

SAINT HERMAN SUMMER PILGRIMAGE, 1979

(*Continued from page* 65)

The next day, Friday, was dedicated to the memory of Father Gerasim, with a Liturgy for his repose and then a full pannikhida for Fr. Gerasim. After breakfast the pilgrims again gathered at the library site for a talk on Father Gerasim as he was remembered by Father Herman, when he visited him on Spruce Island nearly twenty years ago.

FATHER GERASIM OF SPRUCE ISLAND

A brief biography of Fr. Gerasim was printed ten years ago in *The Orthodox Word* (nos. 23 and 29), but since then many of his letters have been found on Mt. Athos and elsewhere, and these complete the picture of the inner make-up of a man who chose to live alone on a deserted island for over thirty years for the sake of the Orthodox understanding of how to serve God and man.

I visited Fr. Gerasim on Spruce Island near Kodiak, Alaska, when he had already had 25 years of desert dwelling and was worn out from the unjust suffering inflicted on him for his refusal to adjust himself to church politics; this struggle also undermined his spiritual strength. He lived in a small hut 500 steps from the roaring ocean shore in an extremely thick spruce forest. So dense is this northern jungle that one cannot walk through it save on the laid-out paths. Farther on in the thicket is the chapel built 80 years ago over the grave of St. Herman.

His cell, which he built himself, had a little annex, his bedroom, where he conducted his prayer-rule, and a low clost for firewood near his stove. Everything was neat and orderly to perfection: freshly-painted and often swept floors, quilted rugs, lace curtains and a bedspread over a hard-board bed, and many inexpensive icons with a number of hanging lamps. I immediately recognized that this excessive tidiness was a means of keeping sanity in this intense loneliness and the overwhelming growth of the wilderness. The coziness was for the sake of warmth but not comfort, which is deadly for a Christian everywhere and always.

Like St. Herman he occasionally had to go to take care of his Aleut flock, who lived at the other end of this impenetrable island, but he preferred to stay permanently in his beloved hermitage, caring for St. Herman's grave. There he unfailingly performed all the monastic church services, praying alone for the world, lost in the denseness of the Alaskan wilds.

During the Dormition fast he served akathists in his cell and commemorated *all* the people he had met in his life. The lists were endless, and so were his tears. I was shaken to the depths of my soul at that prayer. I was caught up in the fervency of his pleading, imploring prayer, and I could not help but weep my heart out, as I never had before or after. But the tears were not tears of sorrow, but of some sweet, unexplainable contrition of heart. There before me, in the commemoration of his friends, passed the whole panorama of his life, for I recognized the names of his parents, monks, bishops, Athonites, fellow laborers in the vineyard of Christ in Alaska, and endless names of his spiritual children whom he had baptized, married, and then sung burial services for—many of them lost in the cold waters of the stormy ocean. When he would finish this prayer, he would be cheerful again as usual, offering me tea and salmon pie of his own baking, and only the starry sky far above the gigantic black spruces bore witness to the length of his *standing before God*. But my heart felt unusually light, and a burning inspiration transfigured all my being.

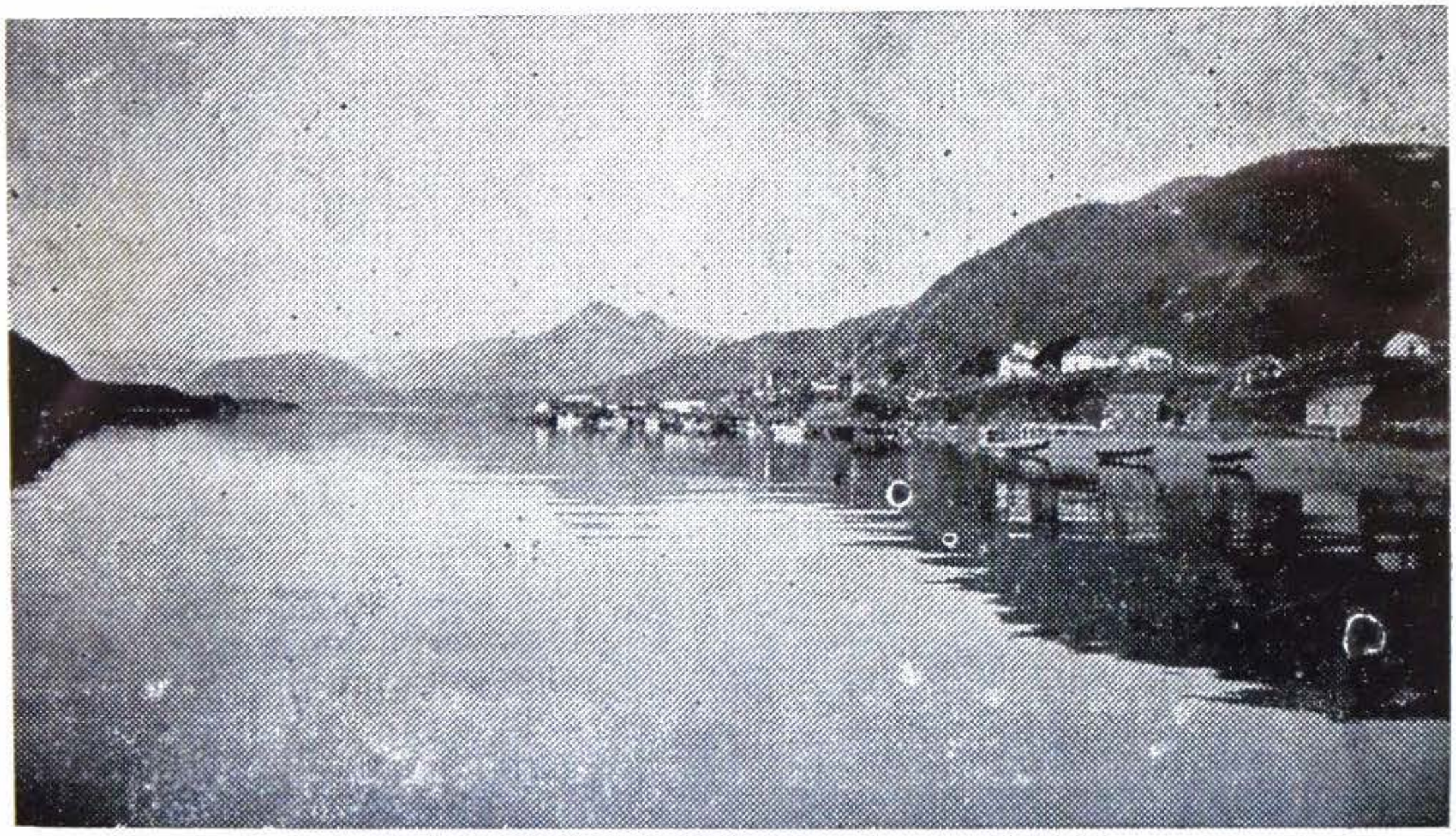
He told me much during my unforgettable stay with him, about his Kaluga childhood and the Holy Russia he bore in his loving heart, about the Optina elders, his Athonite period, and the early days of apostolic labors in Alaska. He spoke with sobriety and truth and warm sincerity: about the miracles of Sts. Herman and Seraphim that he saw with his own eyes, and his bitter years of persecution. As his "leitmotif" he frequently returned to his deep sorrow: "The love for Christ is abandoning our sinful planet."

His standard was the basic Christianity of the heart. He was a genuine transmitter of the authentic experience of Orthodox Russia, placed in the context of 20th-century America, and yet so few valued him, or simply misunderstood. Most of the clergy who were in contact with him were not guarding the age-old Byzantine world-view as he was, but were men of a "party" mentality who despised him for his straightforwardness. He knew the truth better, he knew that Orthodox truth ever since the Soviet Revolution was destined to be persecuted and thus suffer belittlement or various forms of distortion; be knew well the spirit of the "renovationists." Yet he knew too well that the Truth will make men free, and his conscience commanded him to speak out—and so he spoke, eloquently, to the point, with humbleness of heart, uncomplicated and brief.

While Archimandrite Gerasim is not considered a theologian by those whose concept of theology requires learned homilies and advanced degrees, he is indeed a theologian in the true and ancient sense of the word—

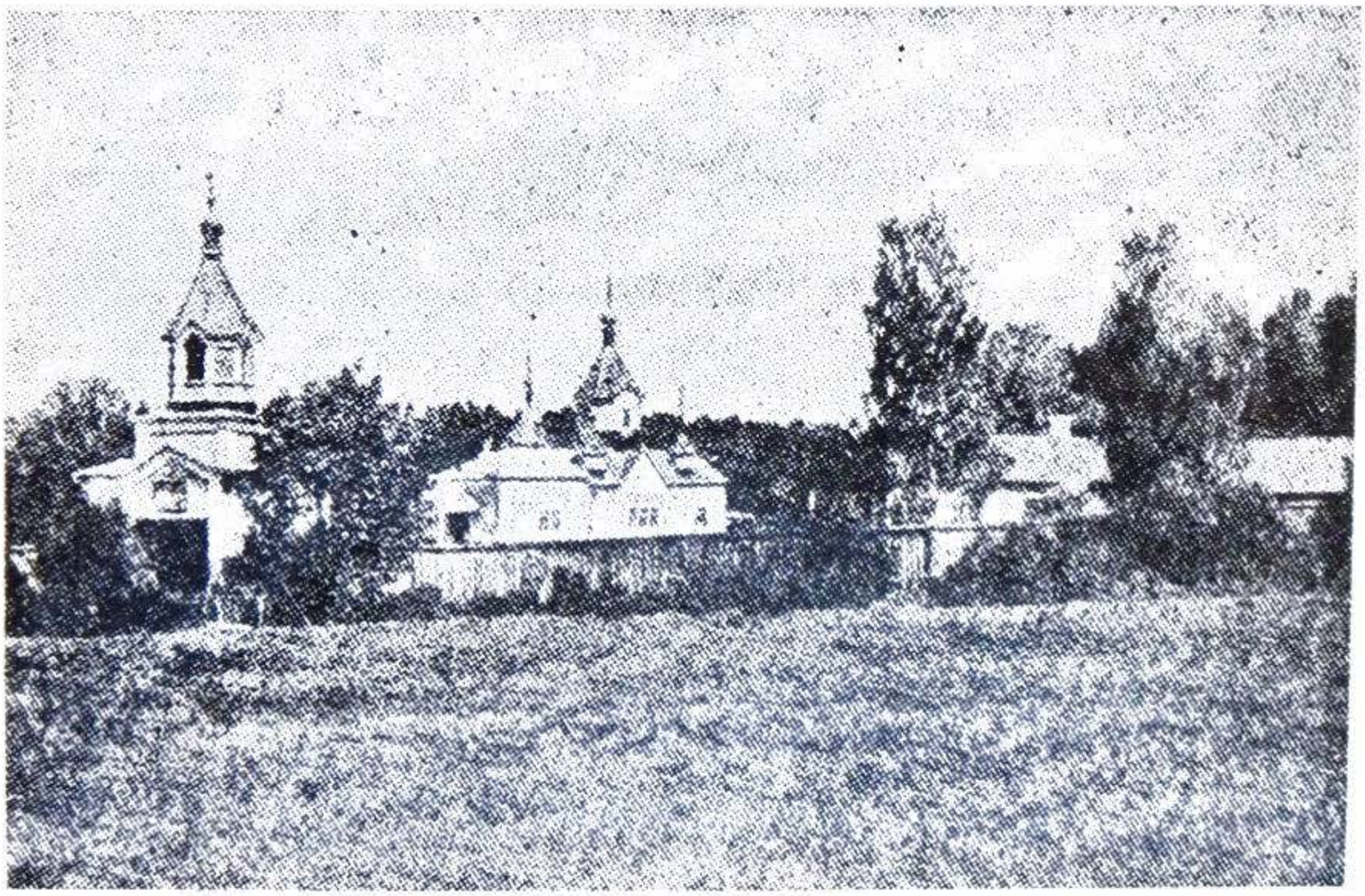
Father Gerasim in his later days

Funeral procession with Fr. Gerasim's Cross



Kodiak Island and town at the time of Fr. Gerasim's arrival, about 1916

General view of St. Tikhon of Kaluga Monastery, 1913



The Skete buildings near St. Tikhon's well, 1913

one who *knows God.* He knew God not simply through book-knowledge, but by a life of true Christian struggle and prayer. It is precisely this *living* Christianity which ignites the heart and sheds the light of Christ into the darkness of the world.

The days were long and warm, late in August. We took walks together, and he showed me spots of unbelievably abundant ripe boysenberries. I ate to satiety, but he only picked berries and made a pie for me. There he used to meet bears and other wild animals. The craggy shores abounded with multicolored wild flowers . . . and the constant flow of his tales of the saints of old and Russian ascetics involuntarily transported my imagination to St. Herman's Valaam or Fr. Gerasim's beloved Mt. Athos, where he knew and corresponded with many righteous slaves of God.

There also, at the grave of St. Herman, my spiritual life was transformed and a dedication to the cause of St. Herman was born. We spent together the hundredth anniversary of the canonization of St. Tikhon of Zadonsk in solemn all-night vigil. I read to him my seminary thesis on this Saint, which in the tenderness of his heart brought tears to his eyes.

I covered many important subjects with him and I was exposed to a new, indispensible dimension which my seminary education had not covered: what America and our 20th-century world needs is to have a *living link* with the universal Apostolic Tradition, a link which stems from the past and leads to the future, and which no books or learned lectures can give; this is, as it were, the mystical aspect of the apostolic succession.

When I was leaving him, an abandoned, even despised old man standing there in tears alone on the shore of Monks' Lagoon, I knew then that I had beheld, contrary to my expectation, a spiritual giant who breathed into me a *life of decision,* a resolve for a living continuation of St. Herman's work for the glory of God in His Orthodox Church, and that, with God's help, *nothing* could take this away from me.

In the afternoon of this day, Fr. Alexey Young gave the first lectures in his intensive course on "How to Survive as an Orthodox Christian in the Contemporary World," warning of many of the spiritual dangers that beset us today. On Saturday the other courses began: one on a general survey of Orthodox theology and Church history, another on the Orthodox interpretation of the book of Daniel, and a third on church music and

singing. Many of the pilgrims stayed for the whole week of these courses, whose emphasis was on the practical side of gaining the Christian knowledge necessary to be faithful to Christ and His holy Church in our difficult times. Between classes there was much lively exchange of views between teachers and students, especially on the Orthodox mission in America today.

On the final day of the courses, Saturday, August 18, two of the catechumens who had attended the courses, one of them a graduate student in history and the other a teacher at the San Francisco Conservatory of Music, received Holy Baptism. Their presence at the Divine Liturgy that day in their white baptismal robes served as an inspiration for all present to keep the purity and fervor of their own baptismal vows.

The pilgrims departed with a new awareness of the vast difference between true Orthodox Christianity and the spirit of the contemporary world, and with a new resolve to offer the struggle necessary to preserve oneself as Orthodox in these difficult times.

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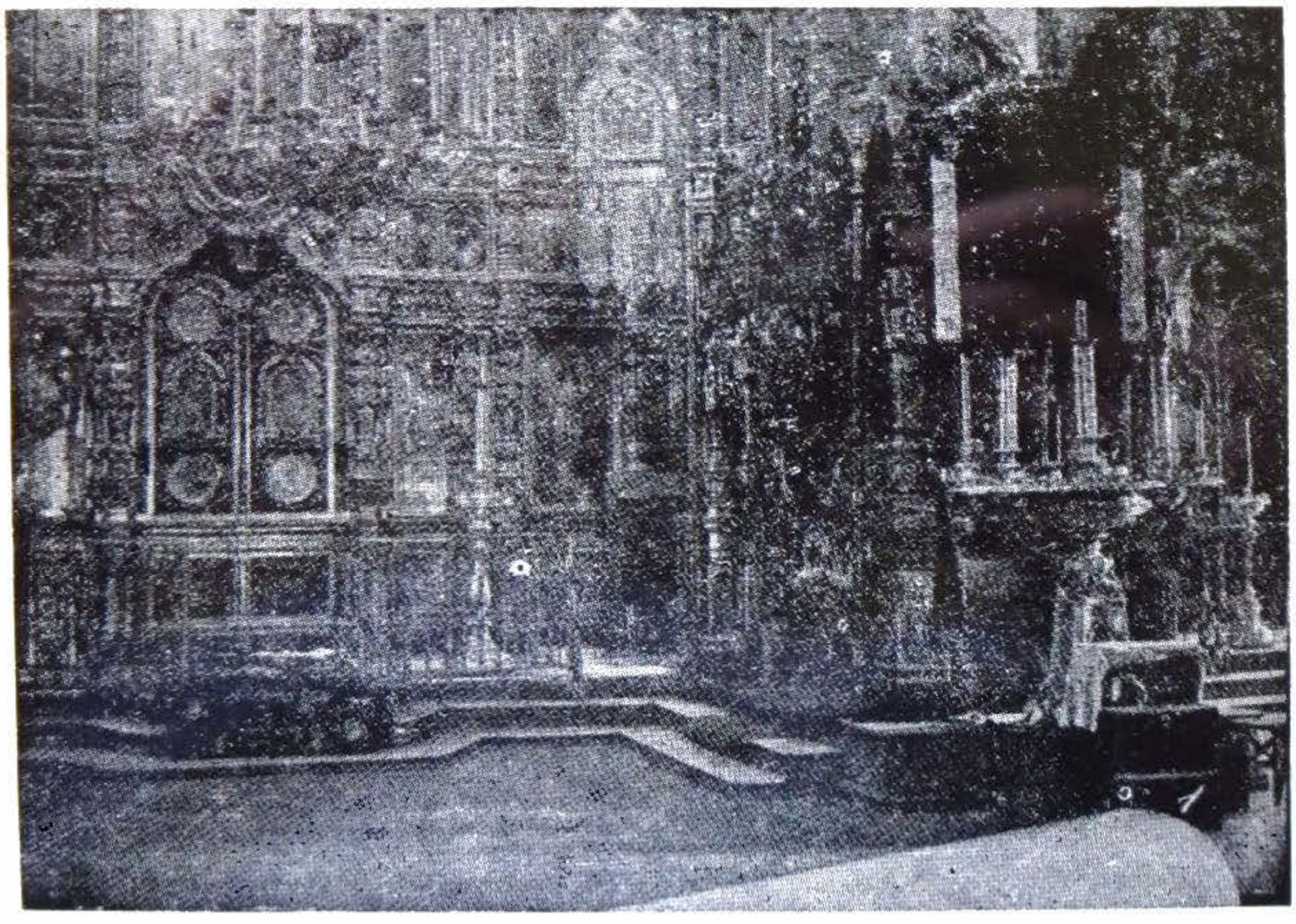
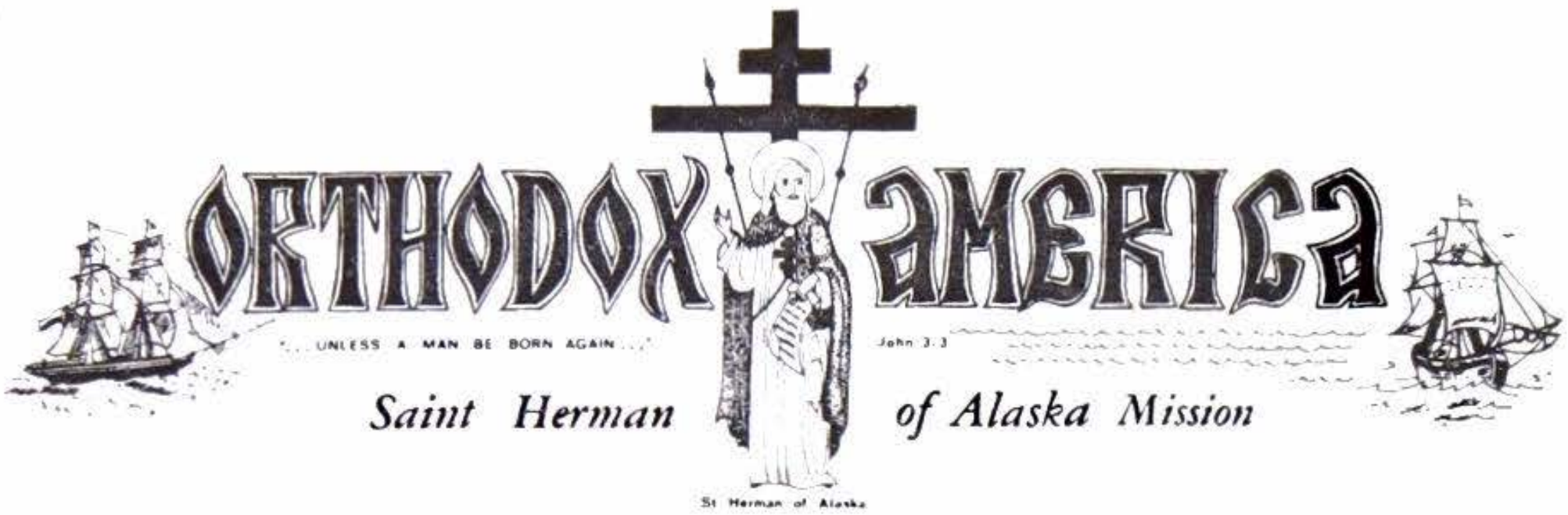
Fr. Gerasim's friends, at the choir practice of St. Tikhon's Monastery, 1906



Reliquary of St. Tikhon in the main church



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